

A message from the Commissioner



During the past year, DNR made significant progress on projects designed to help us find a sustainable balance between working landscapes which generate funds for schools, counties, universities and other local taxing districts; creating healthy ecosystems in our forests, natural areas and aquatic lands; and providing benefits for all the people of Washington, including opportunities for recreation on millions of acres of state trust land.

This report discusses many of the issues we faced and provides details about our finances and our management of those lands. Four issues deserve highlight:

■ During the past two years, we have worked to ensure that DNR's operations were efficient and that our operations live within their means. During that time, we streamlined our operations, cutting more than 160 positions and improving the productivity of our forestry staff by more than 25 percent. These reductions have not been easy, but as we manage state lands to earn revenue, we have to be responsive to the business climate, and our staff has answered the call.

■ We concluded the first round of public involvement on the sustainable harvest calculation, holding six public meetings across the state, numerous meetings with individual interest groups and a special retreat with the Board of Natural Resources in Vancouver, Washington. Currently, DNR staff is compiling this input and has begun the scientific and technical analysis of the alternatives chosen by the Board. We expect to present our results to the public in 2003.

■ We completed several agreements benefiting the environment and creating economic growth and recreational opportunities on aquatic lands. We successfully completed negotiation with two ports who use state lands, made progress on the cleanup of contaminated sediments and finalized rules which ensure a place in state marinas for those who responsibly live aboard their boats. We also reduced the backlog of aquatic leases.

■ We took action to acquire and protect lands that play a key role in maintaining our state's natural heritage, through the Trust Land Transfer Program, federal Endangered Species Act "Section 6" funding, and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grants. We joined with partner agencies to publish an atlas of Washington's amphibians and reptiles on the Internet. We reworked our biennial Natural Heritage Plan and created additional opportunities for public education and research on natural areas.

In the year ahead, we hope to build on these successes with programs to improve the long-term funding for recreation and natural areas, continuing to streamline our operations and improving the economic and environmental health of state aquatic lands.

Thanks to the Legislature and members of the public who helped make these successes possible.


Doug Sutherland
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC LANDS